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RESEARCH IN AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS

Following is a brief summary of research in the Division of Agricultural Economics, AMS.

Some of this work is closely related to research in other agencies of the Department. Many agencies of the Department participate in the outlook and situation work. Several also contribute to the fields of research in which the Division of Agricultural Economics is engaged; for example:

Farm production expenses, the effect of prices on production, and farm labor in Production Economics of ARS.

Food consumption in Human Nutrition of ARS.

The foreign demand for agricultural exports by the Foreign Agricultural Service.

Statistical and Historical Research Branch

In this Branch we analyze some of the main economic problems of agriculture--especially those in the fields of demand, prices, and consumption. The five main lines of work are:

Outlook and Situation. We continuously appraise the situation and outlook for the farm commodities. The results are published in periodical Situation reports and presented at meetings in and outside Washington. Our work also includes special studies, including for example, the economic effects of alternative farm programs.

Economic and Statistical Studies. These include research into the price, supply and consumption of farm products and the development of new statistical methods. Bulletins published have circulated widely among agricultural economists over the country.

Consumption of Agricultural Products. We estimate total and per capita consumption of farm products and study consumption trends. We are emphasizing the development of new series and the analysis of the effects of changes in the economy on the demand for food.

Statistical Data Service. We keep a record of basic statistics on farming and related fields in one section to which requests for information are referred. This section also does statistical and analytical work on parity prices.

Agricultural History. Much of our historical work is used as a background in the development of farm programs. We now have under way a history of surplus disposal and price support programs.

Farm Population and Rural Life Branch

This Branch develops current statistics on farm population and rural life, and makes special studies in this field. We are now planning for research under the Department's Rural Development Program. Our work will be greatly expanded if Congress appropriates the funds requested. Our main lines of work include:

Farm Population. We make studies of the size and distribution of the farm population, movement of people to and from farms, and the age, sex and economic characteristics of farm people.

Farm Manpower. This includes levels of employment, the composition of the farm working force, wage trends and annual earnings of hired farm workers. We also analyze proposed labor or social legislation on which the Department is asked to express a position. We are now studying the effect of the Social Security Act on farm people.

Rural Levels of Living. We prepare level of living indexes for farm operators for each county in the country. We also have under way a rural health research program.

Farm Income Branch

This branch measures farm income and analyzes overall demand for farm products. This work includes:

Farm Income and Expenditure. We develop and publish regularly many series on farm income and expenditures for the nation, the regions, and the States. We have just completed a survey that will give us more information on farm expenditures than we have ever had.

Income and Demand Analysis. We continuously analyze the impact of changes in the general economy on the demand for farm products. We make monthly and annual forecasts of demand, long-range projections, and study the relationships between agriculture and the national economy.

PUBLICATIONS OF THE AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS DIVISION 1950-55

Statistical and Historical Research

Outlook and Situation Work. A large part of the research effort under this project appears in regularly scheduled Outlook and Situation Reports. These reports contain appraisals of economic prospects, regular statistical data, new statistical series and special articles on statistical and economic research. These reports, and the typical number of issues per year, are as follows:

National Food	4
Livestock and Meat	6
Fats and Oils	6
Wheat (including rice and rye in special issues)	5
Feed	6
Fruit	4
Vegetables	4
Sugar	1
Cotton	4
Tobacco	4
Dairy	6
Poultry and Egg	6
Wool	4

Economic and Statistical Studies. Work on the Outlook and Situation Reports is paralleled by basic research into the factors affecting price, supply, and consumption of agricultural commodities. Following is a selected list of such bulletins and studies:

1. Demand and Price Structure for Wheat, Technical Bulletin No. 1136 (November 1955). A statistical analysis of economic forces determining domestic and world prices for wheat and domestic utilization during the marketing year for food, feed, storage and export.
2. Measuring the Supply and Utilization of Farm Commodities, New Indexes, 1924-54, Agriculture Handbook No. 91 (November 1955). A new integrated system of index numbers of supplies and utilization of agricultural commodities, both food and nonfood.
3. Charting the Seasonal Market for Meat Animals, Agriculture Handbook No. 83 (June 1955). Contains measurements of seasonal patterns in production, marketing and prices of meat animals and meat, designed to aid producers in the sale of these commodities.

4. Computational Methods for Handling Systems of Simultaneous Equations, With Applications to Agriculture, Agriculture Handbook No. 94 (November 1955). A handbook to aid research workers to apply modern statistical methods, particularly to supply, demand and price problems in agriculture.
5. Graphic Analysis in Economic Research, Agriculture Handbook No. 84 (June 1955). Illustrates the use of graphic analysis in problems of agricultural economics research.
6. Effects on Outlook Forecasts of Differences Between Early-Season and Final Estimates of Production and Prices for Wheat, Rye and Rice, AMS-38 (April 1955).
7. Demand and Price Structure for Selected Vegetables, Technical Bulletin 1105 (December 1954). Contains measurements of the economic forces influencing demand and price of lettuce, onions, potatoes, cabbage and tomatoes.
8. Prices of Wool at Boston with a Comparison of Prices of Domestic and Imported Wools, Agricultural Information Bulletin No. 118 (January 1954). Compares prices of various domestic and imported shorn wools on the Boston market.
9. Analytical Tools for Measuring Demand, Agriculture Handbook No. 64 (1954). Describes and evaluates various methods for analyzing factors that affect prices and consumption of individual commodities.
10. Regional Trends in Livestock Numbers, Statistical Bulletin No. 146 (1954). Shows trends for all livestock and each kind of livestock in each major producing region of the United States.
11. The Analysis of Demand for Farm Products, Technical Bulletin No. 1081 (1953). Presents, in terms of simple diagrams, demand-supply structures for a number of farm products.
12. Demand and Price Structure for Food Fats and Oils, Technical Bulletin 1068 (1953). Contains analyses designed to measure effects of increased yields of cottonseed oil on prices and total returns.
13. Soybeans:: Economic Analyses Relating to Processing, Marketing Research Report No. 35 (1953). Measures economic effects of adopting specified processing methods that increase yields of soybean oil.
14. Demand and Price Structure for Oats, Barley, and Sorghum Grains, Technical Bulletin 1080 (1953).

15. Consumption of Food in the United States, 1909 1952, Agriculture Handbook 62 (1953). Contains detailed information on per capita consumption of all major foods.
16. Peanuts and Their Uses for Food, Marketing Research Report No. 16 (1952). Analyzes factors that affect consumption in the several alternative outlets.
17. Seasonal Variation: Methods of Measurement and Tests of Significance, Agriculture Handbook 48 (1952).
18. Materials Survey on Apparel Wool, Prepared for National Security Resources Board (1952). Contains background materials for study of requirements.
19. Eating Places as Marketers of Food Products, Marketing Research Report No. 3 (1952). A study of the quantities and types of food consumed in eating places, and marketing practices and costs associated with this industry (1952 - in cooperation with University of Minnesota).
20. Flue-Cured Tobacco: Price Differences Among Types, Marketing Research Report No. 9 (1952).

Statistical Handbooks. Following are the principal statistical handbooks that have been developed since 1950 in conjunction with the Outlook and Situation Reports. Supplements to these publications are issued from time to time.

1. Feed Statistics - Including Wheat, Rye and Rice (1950). Published annually.
2. Statistics on Cotton and Related Data (1951). Annual Supplements.
3. Wool Statistics, Including Mohair, (1949, with Supplement in 1952).
4. Wool Statistics and Related Data (1954, with Supplement in 1956).
5. Dairy Statistics and Related Data (1953).
6. Oilseeds, Fats and Oils and Their Products (1954).

Agricultural History. Following is a list of the major publications in this field. A number of substantial studies have also been made for administrative use.

1. A Chronology of the War Food Administration, Including Predecessor and Successor Agencies, August 1939 to December 1946, (1950).
2. Citrus Fruit During World War II (1950).
3. Meat and Meat Animals in World War Two (1951).
4. A History of the Emergency Farm Labor Supply Program, 1943-47 (1951).
5. A Chronology of the Department of Agriculture's Food Policies and Related Programs, January 1947 to December 1951 (1952).
6. A Chronology of the Department of Agriculture's Food Policies and Related Programs, January 1952 to December 1953 (1954).

Other. Research work in the field of price, supply and consumption has also been utilized over the years in a large number of special studies. Two recent examples are:

1. Research in factors affecting prices and consumption of dairy products provided the basis for a comprehensive report to Congress on Alternative Methods for Supporting Prices to Farmers and Controlling Production of Milk and Butterfat (1955).
2. Research relating to factors affecting rice was utilized in a study of various two-price systems that could be made applicable to this commodity. This study was submitted to Congress by the Department, and published as House Document 100, 84th Congress, First Session (1955).

Farm Income

Statistics on Farm Income. Regular statistical series on farm income and expenditures are published in the Farm Income Situation, issued 6 times a year. Special studies include:

1. This material was published in Farm and Farm People, a joint publication of this agency and of the Bureau of the Census. A special study of the incomes of farm operators and farm people, based on materials in the 1950 Censuses of Agriculture and of Population. (1953).

2. Production Expenses of Farm Operators, by States, 1949-54. This presents detailed estimates for individual expense items, or groups of items. (1956)

3. Index numbers of Volume of Farm Marketings and Home Consumption. (In preparation)

Income and Demand Analysis. Analyses and statistics on the effect of changes in the general economy on the overall demand for farm products and appraisals of the outlook are presented monthly in the Demand and Price Situation. In addition, we have published, or have in process, the following:

1. An Appraisal of the Long-Run Demand for Farm Products. A working draft of a manuscript was completed in December 1955. These materials when reviewed and published will provide the statistical base from which to appraise agricultural prospects and programs.

2. A Statistical Compilation of U. S. Farm Products in Foreign Trade, prepared cooperatively by this agency and the Foreign Agricultural Service. Published 1953.

Farm Population and Rural Life

Farm Population Continuing statistical series are published on the size and characteristics of the farm population. Estimates of the size of the national farm population are made annually from sample surveys, including data on the age and employment status of this population. These estimates are used in computing per capita farm income, farm production, and other measures relating to the economic status and level of living of the farm population. Closely allied to these figures are yearly estimates of the number of people moving to farms or away from farms. Much of the work is done in cooperation with the State land grant colleges. We also conduct basic research into farm population. Following is a list of research studies that have been published:

1. Farm Population Estimates by States. . .1920-50. . . , Farm Population. . . Migration To and From Farms, 1920-54, and Farm Population Estimates for 1955. These three publications contain estimates of farm population for specified areas.

2. Estimates of the Farm Population of the United States (specified dates). Mos. 14-21 in Census-BAE or AMS (P-27) Series. Contain estimates of U. S. farm population and data on age, sex, and employment status.

3. Farms and Farm People. (1953) Examined the relationship between the economic characteristics of farms and the population and housing characteristics of their farm operator families.

4. Differential Migration in the Corn and Cotton Belts. (1953) A study of the characteristics of migrants moving from non-metropolitan areas to cities in these Belts.

5. Population Change and Net Migration in the North Central States, 1940-1950. (1955) Studies the relation of rural-urban migration to agricultural and industrial trends.

Farm Labor. Annual reports on the Hired Farm Working Force analyze the U. S. farm labor situation as regards numbers, distribution, time worked and wages earned with respect to both migratory and nonmigratory hired farm workers. Facilities of the Bureau of the Census are used in making these annual surveys. Other publications in this field include:

1. Cotton and Manpower, Texas High Plains (1953).

2. The Hired Farm Working Force of 1952 (Including Migratory Workers) (1953) and Migratory Farm Workers in 1949 (1950). Include data on wages earned and time worked for hired farm workers.

3. Regular Hired Workers on Commercial Dairy Farms in Connecticut (1953). Study of conditions of employment and factors related to labor turnover among dairy farm operators.

4. Unemployment and Partial Employment of Hired Farm Workers in Four Areas (1953). (New Mexico, Georgia, Arkansas, Louisiana) Study of patterns of employment and earnings of partially employed persons in specified areas.

5. Utilization of Rural Manpower in Eastern Kentucky (1953). Contains information relating to underemployment of rural people and possibilities of fuller utilization of manpower resources.

6. Old Age and Retirement in Rural Connecticut (1953). Farmers Conceptions and Plans for Economic Security in Old Age (1953). The Farmer Looks at his Economic Security (1954), and Farmers' Plans for Security in Old Age (1955). Studies done in Kentucky, Wisconsin, Texas, and Connecticut.

7. The Farmer and Old Age Security (1955).

8. A Study of Rural Manpower in Southeastern Oklahoma (1955).
9. Migratory Farm Workers in the Atlantic Coast Stream (1955).

Levels of Living. Farm operator level-of-living indexes for counties, economic areas and States are compiled and published. These publications include:

1. Farm Operator Family Level of Living Indexes, for Counties of the United States, 1930, 1940, 1945, and 1950, (1952).
2. Farm Operator Family Level of Living Indexes, for States, 1950-54, (1955).
3. Acceptance of Voluntary Health Insurance in Four Rural Communities of Hayward County, N. C., 1953, (1954).
4. Enrollment in Voluntary Health Insurance in North Carolina, 1953, (1954)
5. Health Resources and their Use by Rural People in Clinton County, New York, 1951, (1952). (Similar studies in Livingston, Oswego, Chautauqua, and Cortland Counties, N. Y.)

WORK AND LINE PROJECTS
AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS DIVISION

Farm Population and Rural Life Branch

FP 1 Farm Population Studies

- FP 1-1 Estimates and analyses of size, composition and changes in current and future farm population, and service work in population statistics.
- FP 1-2 Current estimates and analyses of migration of the farm and rural population.
- FP 1-3 Replacement rates for farm men of working age, for counties, economic areas and States, 1950-60.
- FP 1-4 Agricultural and population characteristics of economic areas and subregions of the United States.
- FP 1-5 Analysis of the composition of the 1950 farm population, from the collated sample of the Censuses of population, housing, and agriculture.
- FP 1-7 Population, agricultural and economic factors relating to migration in the North Central Region.
- FP 1-8 Population trends and changes in the Northeast affecting agricultural programs, rural life, and rural tax.

FP 2 Farm Manpower Analysis

- FP 2-1 Current analyses and service work in agricultural manpower, employment and wages.
- FP 2-2 Analysis of farm wage rates by economic areas.
- FP 2-4 Trends in tenure status of male farm workers.
- FP 2-5 Shifts in agricultural manpower accompanying rapid expansion of industrial activity in western Kentucky.
- FP 2-6 Analysis of the social and related economic effects of the Social Security program on the agricultural labor force and rural life.

FP 3 Rural Levels of Living Studies

- FP 3-1 Development and maintenance of level of living indexes of farm families.
- FP 3-2 Utilization of health facilities and acceptance of voluntary health insurance by rural families.
- FP 3-3 Nature and extent of and enrollment in voluntary health insurance programs in rural areas.

Farm Income Branch

FI 1 Measurement and analysis of farm income and expenditures

- FI 1-1 Current estimates and cash receipts, gross and net farm income, incomes of farm people for the United States as a whole and related series which aid in appraising the agricultural situation and outlook.

FI 2 Income and demand analysis as applied to agriculture and the agricultural outlook

- FI 2-1 Agricultural situation and outlook analysis, including domestic and foreign demand, short term and long term, improvements in data and techniques, and service work.

Statistical and Historical Research Branch

SR 1 Current outlook and situation analysis for agricultural commodities

- SR 1-1 Current outlook and situation analysis for livestock and meats.
- SR 1-2 Current outlook and situation analysis for fats, oils and oilseeds.
- SR 1-3 Current outlook and situation analysis for milk and manufactured dairy products.
- SR 1-4 Current outlook and situation analysis for poultry and eggs.
- SR 1-5 Current outlook and situation analysis for food grains.

- SR 1-6 Current outlook and situation analysis for feed grains and other feeds.
- SR 1-7 Current outlook and situation analysis for fruits and tree nuts.
- SR 1-8 Current outlook and situation analysis for vegetables.
- SR 1-9 Current outlook and situation analysis for sugar and allied sweeteners.
- SR 1-10 Current outlook and situation analysis for cotton and synthetic fibers.
- SR 1-11 Current outlook and situation analysis for animal fibers.
- SR 1-12 Current outlook and situation analysis for tobacco and tobacco products.

SR 2 Price, supply, and utilization analysis for farm products

- SR 2-1 Development, consultation and service work on methodology and computation of price, supply, and utilization analysis for farm products.
- SR 2-3 Identification of economic factors that affect the price and consumption of milk and dairy products and measurement of their influence.
- SR 2-4 Identification of economic factors that affect consumption of major textile fibers in the United States and measurement of their influence.
- SR 2-5 Identification of economic factors that affect the production, price and utilization of milk and measurement of their influence.
- SR 2-6 Identification of economic factors that affect the price, supply, and consumption of eggs and measurement of their influence.
- SR 2-7 Identification of economic factors that affect the price and utilization of byproduct feeds and measurement of their influences.
- SR 2-8 Identification of economic factors that affect the supply, price and utilization of hides and leather and measurement of their influence.

- SR 2-9 Specialized analyses of alternative stabilization and inventory policies for feed grain, wheat, and livestock products.
- SR 2-10 Differences between early-season and final estimates of supply, price and demand factors for crops and livestock.
- SR 2-11 Identification of economic factors that affect the price and consumption of meat and measurement of their influence.
- SR 2-12 Identification of economic factors that affect the supply, price and utilization of tobacco and tobacco products and measurement of their influence.
- SR 2-13 Identification of economic factors that affect the price and utilization of cotton and cotton products and measurement of their influence.
- SR 2-14 Identification of economic factors that affect the price, supply and consumption of commercial broilers, farm chickens, and turkeys and measurement of their influence.
- SR 2-15 Identification of economic factors that affect the price and supply of hogs and measurement of their influence.
- SR 2-16 Identification of economic factors that affect the price and utilization of selected fruits and measurement of their influence.
- SR 2-17 Identification of economic factors that affect the aggregate supply responses of farmers for specified agricultural products and measurement of their influence from time series data.
- SR 2-18 Identification of economic factors that affect the price and supply of beef cattle and measurement of their influence.
- SR 2-19 Identification of economic factors that simultaneously affect the entire feed-livestock economy and measurement of their influence.

SR 3 Statistical Data services

- SR 3-1 Statistical services which includes the centralization, maintenance, and analysis of basic economic data relating to agriculture.

SR 4 Agricultural history

- SR 4-1 Service work on the history of agriculture, including collection, maintenance, and analysis of historical data.
- SR 4-2 Documentation of department policies, organization and administration.
- SR 4-3 History of production adjustment plans and programs: Surplus disposal and price support programs.

SR 5 Measurement and analysis of supplies and consumption of food

- SR 5-1 Outlook analysis and current estimation of supplies and consumption of food and other products originating in agriculture.
- SR 5-2 Development of indexes to measure aspects of supply and utilization of farm commodities for food and nonfood use.
- SR 5-3 Analysis of effects of changes in the structure of the United States economy on the demand for foods and fibers.
- SR 5-4 Analysis of data from 1955 food consumption survey.
- SR 5-5 Analysis of consumption and demand for processed foods by different types of consumers and users.

PROPOSALS FOR COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION REGARDING
RESEARCH IN AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS

- A. Breakdowns of farmers' income by economic classes and types of farms. There is considerable demand for information on farmers' incomes by economic class and various types of farms by States. In many ways the income situation on commercial farms is significantly different than that on low production farms. The average income for all farms obscures these differences. Also, the income situation varies within the State according to type of farm. In order to provide information of this kind a considerable expansion in basic data would be necessary.
- B. Annual surveys of incomes and expenditures. In order to maintain reliable estimates of national farm income and expenditures, surveys of farmer's incomes and expenditures such as this year's survey should be continued on a more or less regular basis. Changes in technology and in farm programs may alter income and production expense patterns considerably over the next several years.
- C. Purchasing power of farmers, compared to nonfarmers. Considerable research needs to be accomplished on determining the purchasing power of farm persons as compared with nonfarm persons. This involves particularly the valuation of home produced food and price level differentials as between rural and urban centers. In view of the concentration of a considerable part of the farm population in the South and of the industrial population in the North this would have more significance on a State basis than for the U. S. as a whole.
- D. Relations between agriculture and the rest of the economy. Considerable interest has developed in recent years on the fact that farm income has declined with no appreciable effect on the economy as a whole. In fiscal 1957 we expect to initiate a modest project to examine the relationships between agriculture and the rest of the economy and to determine specifically what effect a decline in agricultural prices and income has on the national economy and vice versa. However, this type of work needs a great deal more attention than we have ever given it in the past.
- E. Annual surveys of farm population. Existing surveys on which the estimates of the size and composition of the farm population rest should be expanded to improve the reliability of the estimates for the United States as a whole and to provide adequate estimates at the regional level. Eventually the survey program should be expanded to provide annual estimates of the farm population by States.

- F. Improvement of basic data and analysis of farm employment. A limited amount of funds is being requested in the 1957 budget for experimental work in improving the AMS farm employment estimates with a view to developing the statistical techniques for such estimates to be currently available by States and type of farm and for more detailed information on characteristics of the farm working force. Along with the development of such basic statistics would go an expansion of research in analyses of farm manpower problems, including changes in distribution, composition of the work force, and utilization by type of farming areas. Research should also be expanded on farm wage trends and the factors underlying such trends.
- G. Effects of changing farm income on levels of living. This research would be based on periodic sample surveys of farm operator families from whom fairly detailed information would be obtained on their year's income from farm and from nonfarm sources, respectively, on their possessions and purchases of important goods and services used in family living, and on the reasons underlying their indicated changes in consumption or purchases. By means of a recurring series of such surveys, it will be possible to obtain the facts now lacking on the specific effects of income changes on the actual content of the level of living of farm operator families.
- H. International levels of living and their effects on U. S. exports and imports of farm products. A great deal of basic research needs to be done to develop satisfactory methodological approaches to measure relative levels of living among countries. It is believed that once adequate measures of comparative levels of living and of trends in these levels are developed, we would have an important tool for studying and projecting current and future trends in exports of agricultural products to foreign countries and of the trends in their farm exports to the United States. This research would also make important contributions to the evaluation of technical assistance programs to economically underdeveloped countries and the short and long range effects of such programs on U. S. agriculture.
- I. Expanded outlook work, including regional outlook. We have a continuing obligation to increase the accuracy and usefulness of our outlook service. Suggestions for expansion have included more frequent reports and more adequate analysis of both short-run price changes and the intermediate and long-run prospects for individual commodities and for agriculture as a whole. A frequent request is to provide more outlook information on a regional basis, as some State Extension Services find the national appraisals too broad for their best use. More attention to farm-family-living outlook has also been urged. We hope to be able to do more in the way of meeting this type of request. In this connection, we will assist next year in a special Regional Livestock Outlook Project for the Western States, centered at Denver, and we are considering an invitation for fuller participation thereafter.

- J. Effect of prices on production. Greater progress has been made in the analysis of demand for farm products than in the analysis of supplies. There is, however, increasing interest in the problem of relationship between prices and production, particularly when prices to farmers are supported by the Government or supplemented by direct payments.
- K. Further strengthening of basic research on demand and prices. Longer-run improvements in the commodity outlook work and our ability to make accurate analyses of the impact of alternative government programs on prices and income, depend on improvements in basic research in economics and statistics. Next year particular attention will be given to analysis of factors affecting prices of meat animals and meat, demand and price structure for rice, and analysis of new data relating to the consumption of tobacco products.
- L. Geography of prices. There is considerable geographical variation in prices received by farmers, and consequently, a considerable interest on the part of farmers in particular areas in factors that cause their prices to differ appreciably from those received by producers in competing areas. It is known that geographic variations are affected by such factors as transportation rates, variations in classes and grades of commodities produced, and the relation of the supply of a particular area to the total national supply and to the seasonal pattern of marketings. We are already beginning to give increased emphasis to analysis of factors that account for geographical price variation, though progress in this direction will first be limited to a few major commodities where the data for actually measuring regional differences are sufficiently adequate to provide the basis for statistical and economic study.
- M. Effect of changing dietary habits on the demand for farm products. Shifts in food consumption have resulted from changes in nutritional needs of the population and from nutrition education. Research on nutrition and on the effect of nutrition education on food habits should be strengthened and interpreted for agricultural programs.
- N. Analysis of existing and proposed programs. We should expand research to furnish an objective basis for appraising the relative merits of alternative farm program proposals. This includes research concerning the effects of programs on production, consumption and demand, farmers' incomes, and costs to farmers and to the Government. Many agencies in the Department occasionally work on specific programs at the request of the Congress or of the Secretary. But this work needs more regular and systematic attention.





